in Retail Outlets through retail automation are being introduced.

(vii) Branding of Retail Outlets and third party certification of Retail Outlets have been initiated by the OMCs.

(viii) A pilot project has been approved for strengthening the distribution network of PDS kerosene with a view to working towards ensuring that this product is made available to the targeted consumers and is not diverted for adulteration.

Measures to check adulteration are kept under continuous review of the Government.

Study on Demand for Kerosene

3508. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the SKO dealership has in general become economically unviable and allocation of SKO all over the country has been reducing over the last few years due to increase in release of LPG connections;

(b) if so, the details of the efforts being made by the oil companies and district civil supplies authorities to increase profitability of SKO-LDO dealers;

(c) whether Government propose to conduct a study of the demand of kerosene at various prices and to strengthen the kerosene distribution system; and

(d) whether Government propose to increase the commission of SKO-LDO dealers?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Central Government allocates Kerosene (SKO) to the States and Union Territories (UTs) for distribution under the Public Distribution system (PDS). In terms of the policy in place since 2001-02, SKO allocations to States/UTs have been reduced after taking into account the number of new LPG connections released in the States/ Uts. The States/UTs were advised to rationalize the distribution of their kerosene quotas by excluding ration card holders having LPG connections with single/double cylinders, and distributing the quantity thus saved to needy people. Maintaining viability is the important consideration for OMCs.

OMCs have reported that they consider a viability norm of 75 KL sales

per month for SKO dealerships and their average monthly PDS SKO allocation per dealer during the year 2004-05 works out to be higher than this norm. Further, with a view to improving viability of SKO dealers, they have been allowed to market non-PDS kerosene to small consumers, LDO to small customers requiring LDO for agriculture pump sets/small-scale industries, etc. and lubricating oil.

(c) The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) have been commissioned to undertake the first-ever study of kerosene demand in the country. Further action will be taken after the NCAER report has been received and studied. A pilot project has also been approved for strengthening the distribution network of PDS kerosene with a view to ensuring that SKO is made available to the targeted consumers and is not diverted for adulteration.

(d) As of now, there is no such proposal with the Government.

LPG distributions in district headquarters

†3509. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state

(a) the names of the district headquarters of various States in the country wherein agency for LPG distribution has not been authorised;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) by when, it is proposed to authorise any agency in such district headquarters; and

(d) the details of the action being taken for the same?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) At present, Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are not operating LPG distributorships at 16 district headquarters in various States. The details of these locations are given in the Statement. *(See below)*

(b) to (d) LPG distributorships are set up by OMCs in accordance with their commercial considerations. The commissioning of LPG distributorships depends upon various factors such as identification of viable locations, release of advertisements, conducting interviews, ability of the candidate to secure land for godown, showroom etc.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.